

Program Outline

Language Diversity and Multilingual Recognition for Younger Generation Ethnic Minorities in Japan

1, Opening Remarks

Dr. Jackie J. Kim-Wachutka, Ritsumeikan University

2. Negotiating Japanese Language Education beyond Monolingual Ideology: A Multilingual and Multicultural Perspective

Dr. Yumi Sugihara, Keio University

This talk explores how Japanese language and cultural education can move beyond monolingual and monocultural ideologies embedded in Japanese society. It examines key challenges through K-12 cases and highlights three studies on higher education courses: a Japanese language course where learners explore “my language” as plurilingual users, a multicultural communication course emphasizing self-reflexivity, and a translanguaging-based course. The talk demonstrates the potential to foster a more inclusive multilingual and multicultural society.

3. Against the Odds: Factors Driving Positive Outcomes for Foreign Children in Japan

Dr. Carlos Ochante, Nara Gakuen University

This presentation explores the success of foreign migrant children in Japan through a unique, multi-layered lens. As a former migrant child, I analyze how key support persons contribute to success. Now, as a parent of children with international roots, I also navigate the very systems I study. This dual perspective—researching past challenges while living current ones—offers a profound understanding of the enduring journey and the crucial support needed to thrive across generations in Japan.

4. The Challenges of Heritage Language Transmission Among South-East Asian Parents in Japan: Implications for Child Well-being

Dr. Janice Nakamura, Kanagawa University

Most parents want their children to speak their language. While foreign parents in Japan are no exception, many face challenges in transmitting their heritage language. Drawing on interviews with Southeast Asian parents and bicultural children in international marriages, this talk examines the factors contributing to heritage language loss and its impact. The research underscores the need to support bilingualism among minority children in Japan to promote their overall well-being.

5. Considering Access to Education and Language Support: Fieldwork in Public Elementary Schools, Night Junior High Schools, and Ethnic Schools

Dr. Tori Homma, Doshisha University

This presentation explores how immigrant children and youth in Japan encounter barriers to public education—or, when admitted, are often positioned at its margins. Drawing on fieldwork conducted in a public elementary school, a night junior high school, and an ethnic school, I examine how institutional contexts shape the experiences of children and youth, their language learning and identity formation.

6. Discussion, Q&A and Closing Remarks

Register



[\(Click here\)](#)

View Local Time



[\(Click here\)](#)

Campus Map



[\(Click here\)](#)

Organized by: Dr. Jackie J. Kim-Wachutka (Project Director)
<https://jackiekim-wachutka.com/contact>

“Ethnic Communities Within Global Japanese Studies – Encountering Diversity in a Multi-Ethnic, Multi-Cultural Japan”

Language Diversity and Multilingual Recognition for Younger Generation Ethnic Minorities in Japan

(International Collaborative Research-Networking Talk Series at Ritsumeikan University)

Sponsored by Toshiba International Foundation

November 29, 2025
(Saturday)

11:00 - 13:00 JST

Ritsumeikan University,
Hirai Kaichiro Memorial Library
Conference Room
-- Hybrid Zoom Online

Japan is experiencing a noticeable rise in the number of foreign population residing as long-term and permanent residents. Japanese language-acquisition programs and initiatives in public schools, prefectural and municipal organizations, and grassroots community centers located in areas with high concentration of ethnic minorities reveal both achievements and challenges, indicating a need for detailed assessment of methods and practices of improvement that initiates a vital interethnic dialogue. Multicultural, multiethnic awareness education centered on language elucidates the possibility and potential for new innovative methods of encountering foreign-born as well as Japan-born individuals connected to migratory experience and their educational pursuits, goals, and aspirations. This session highlights the presence and importance of language versatility as well as bilingual and multilingual recognition in education, which illuminates the growing trend of diverse language abilities and acquisition within an increasingly multiethnic Japan.

